

REMARKS

As discussed, claim 23 as amended herein corresponds to former claim 33 in independent form. All other remaining claims depend from claim 23. Claim 33 was rejected in view of the combination of Potts '727 and Simpson '130, in further view of Gilbert and Weipert.

As amended herein, claim 23 calls for the additional limitation of an antistatic agent applied ***over the coating of non-ionic fluoropolymer on only one side of the laminate***, wherein the antistatic agent is an organic phosphate ester. The antistatic agent is not a component of the non-ionic fluoropolymer coating, but is applied as an additional element over the coating and to only one side of the laminate. This configuration does not result from the combination of references used in the rejection of claim 33.

With respect to claim 33, the Final Office states:

Potts discloses that an antistatic agent may be present in combination with the repellent agent. Potts does not specifically mention an organic phosphate ester antistatic agent, but Gilbert and Weipert each disclose that it is known in the antistatic art to use an organic phosphate ester antistatic agent. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to make the antistatic agent from any suitable antistatic composition, such as an organic phosphate ester, as taught by Gilbert and Weipert, because it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability and desired characteristics. (Emphasis added)

As discussed extensively in prior Amendments, Potts '727 expressly teaches that the additives, including the fluoropolymer and antistatic agents, are added as a component of the melt extruded fibers as the fibers are formed so that the additives do not migrate from the fibers to an adjacent layer to any significant degree. However, as recognized

by the Examiner, the additives will obviously migrate uniformly to the surfaces of the individual fibers. Thus, even if one of the antistatic agents of Gilbert and Weipert were substituted for the antistatic agent of Potts as proposed by the Examiner, the antistatic agent would be homogeneously mixed with all of the other additives, including the fluoropolymer additive, and present uniformly over the surfaces of the fibers. The antistatic agent would not be a separate element applied over a first dried fluoropolymer coating and only one side of the laminate, as called for in claim 23. Also, because of the antistatic characteristics of the individual fibers in the proposed combination, those skilled in the art would have no logical reason to separately apply an additional antistatic agent to one side of the laminate.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the merits of the obviousness rejection of former claim 33 as applied to claim 23 amended herein.

Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 23 is allowable. All of the remaining claims depend from claim 23 and are allowable for at least the reasons claim 23 is allowable. With entry of the present amendment, the application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at his convenience should he have any questions or require any additional information.

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